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19 November 1968

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central  
Intelligence

SUBJECT : Cruise Missile Submarine Threat

1. In connection with Rear Admiral Miller's memorandum of 28 October 1968, it is useful to recall the exact wording in NIE 11-14-67 (paragraph 47):

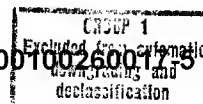
"The cruise-missile submarines are equipped with the SS-N-3 missile. We estimate that the SS-N-3 can be fired to a maximum range of 450 n.m., but that its likely operational range would be on the order of 250 n.m. The cruise-missile submarines have a primary mission against naval ships, especially carrier task forces. They could also be used against land targets, but we believe that the Soviet requirement for such employment is becoming increasingly marginal."

2. I believe the last sentence deals with the question Admiral Miller raises. No one questions the ability of the Soviets to use the weapon in the E, J, and W classes--particularly the E--against CONUS. But equally we believe, along with Admiral Harlfinger, that most of the SS-N-3's would probably be targeted against ships. For the Soviets to use their cruise missile submarines in the strategic strike role against CONUS would be hazardous (the submarine must surface to launch) and inefficient (the SS-N-6 will have greater range, accuracy, and penetrability).

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3. The E-class construction program has ended and a major commitment to a large Y-class program has been made. With a substantial SS-N-6 SLBM force operational, it seems unlikely to me that the intended use of the available cruise missile submarines would be against land targets in the US. The Soviets do not need their cruise missile tubes to have an assured destruction capability against the US. They need those tubes for what they add to their damage-limiting capabilities against US strikes from carrier aircraft.

4. In short, I believe the intelligence community would be well advised to steer clear of the judgment, suggested in paragraph 4 of Admiral Miller's memorandum, that the role of the Soviet cruise missile submarine is equally anti-ship and strategic strike. That just doesn't square with the facts.


5. I attach a more detailed review of the strategic employment of Soviet cruise missile submarines for your information.



BRUCE C. CLARKE, Jr.  
Director  
Strategic Research

Attachment: a/s

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